

Station 31 Task Force Meeting February 27, 2004

Chief's Progress Report

Chief Greg Dean gave a progress update. The optional blood lead level tests will be available to Station 31 firefighters through June 30, 2004 at the Public Health North Health Center. He will follow-up with a memorandum stating this. The Station 31 site visit by the Medical Testing Advisory Panel is confirmed for Wednesday, March 10th from 7:30 am to 8:30 am. Chief Tipler will communicate this information to firefighters.

Epidemiological Study Advisory Panel Update

Maggie McDonald gave an update on the Epi Panel meeting, which took place on February 26th. Nguyet Tran, Applied Epidemiology Fellow at the Department of Health reviewed the objective, methodology, advantages and limitations for the Proportional Incidence Ratio (PIR) study and raised issues for discussion. In order to capture cancer cases in all of Washington state, linkages will be made both to the FHCRC Cancer Surveillance System and the Department of Health Cancer Registry. The comparison population will be the population residing in King, Snohomish and Pierce counties. Two analyses will be done. One will include all 1622 individuals in the Station 31 database. The second will include all individuals in the database that have been assigned to Station 31 at least 180 hours (approx. 1 month) in the 1975-2003 time period.

There was a general discussion at the Epi Panel meeting that these are very small sample sizes that make it unlikely that the study results will be statistically significant (ie, results will be due to randomness and no causal relationships can be determined). David Solet also stated that another limitation of the study will be that exposures other than working at station 31 (eg, environmental exposures outside of work, lifestyle or behavioral choices) will be included in the study. The epidemiologists recognized the need for clear communication about what the results mean and do not mean.

Projections at this time indicate the preliminary analysis will be complete by late May with a final report completed by mid-June.

Medical Testing Advisory Panel Update

Maggie McDonald stated that, as mentioned above, the four physician members of the Medical Testing Advisory Panel will come to Station 31 on Wednesday, March 10th to address firefighters' questions about their impressions of the Prezant study and the medical screening information recently distributed.

The Fire Pension Board will reimburse for optional blood lead level tests for out-of-town retirees who get the test in their communities.

In order to report aggregate results on the optional blood lead level testing, confidentiality laws require that firefighters give authorization. As such, health information release authorization forms will be sent to firefighters for their signature.

Budget

Maggie McDonald reviewed the actual expenditures and projected budget for the expert panel work as of the end of February 2004.

Remediation Work

Joe Garcia reported that final results on the core sampling for lead will be ready late Friday, February 27th or Monday, March 1st. Clean-up can be scheduled once the final results are in. PCB ballasts have been removed. The city is investigating options to adjust air pressure in the living areas per NIOSH recommendations. An adjustment could be implemented by summer. Sealing the building is slated for Spring - more information will be forthcoming about this. Mr. Garcia stated that his department is developing a plan so that maintenance dollars earmarked in asset preservation funding and levy funding are maximized.

Station 31

Bruce Amer stated that the people at Station 31 want to thank Mayor Nickels for what has been accomplished so far and addressing their issues.

Local 27

Dennis Karl expressed his disappointment that the city issued a press release stating that the building was clean, after Local 27 had stated they were not interested in a joint statement. Helen Fitzpatrick stated that no press release was issued; the fire department responded to an interview request by King TV.

Local 27 would like a copy of the Station 31 database. Edsonya Charles has contacted the city's Legal and Labor Relations departments for their advice on what information can be given in accordance with privacy laws. Permissible information will be shared with Local 27.

Next Meeting

The next Station 31 Task Force meeting will be held after the epidemiological study is complete. At this point, a meeting can be anticipated in the late June/early July timeframe.